

**Stisted Parish Council
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 1 May 2024 at 8.30pm**

Present: Councillor Mark Hughes – Chairman (resigning)
Councillor Alan Routledge – Vice Chairman (resigning)
Councillor Richard White
Councillor Howard Hollands
Councillor Bob Powers
Councillor Cheryl Hill-Cottingham
Councillor Eleanor McMillan

In attendance: Mrs Ruth Jubb – Clerk
Braintree Cllr Tom Walsh
Braintree Cllr Dennis Abram
4 members of the public

12 Election of Chair

The meeting was opened by Cllr Hughes who tendered his resignation as chair but remained as a councillor. After debate for volunteers, it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Routledge was elected to be the new Chair. Proposed Cllr Powers, 2nd Cllr McMillan and agreed by all by show of hands. Declaration form completed. Cllr Routledge stated his thanks to Cllr Hughes for his services over the past year as chair and the previous years as a councillor.

13 Election of Vice Chairman

As Cllr Routledge had taken on the role of Chair, there was a vacancy for Vice Chair. As there were no volunteers, it was agreed to defer to the next Parish Council Meeting in June for volunteers and a vote.

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies: County Cllr Paul Thorogood. A written report was sent in which is attached to these minutes.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

The following items was raised by a member of the public:

- A resident raised concerns about grass cutting in the village today as there were clumps of grass left after cutting (some months of the contract are to mulch the clippings rather than collect. Some complaints were made to the resident. **ACTION** Cllr Hughes & Cllr Routledge agreed to check the condition of grass & follow up as required.

16.1 County & District Councillors

- Cllr Tom Walsh stated he felt that there was a good strong community in Stisted.
- The first point raised was regarding planning. There are several significant plans in the area for incinerators, solar farms and Pylons etc. However, there are no plans to upgrade the A120 before 2033 and no budget allocated which could cause issues.
- The Community Shop has been awarded a grant – **ACTION** Clerk to follow up on conditions of the Grant and arrange payment.
- There are 3 possible quarries in the area and so far, there have been about 5,000 objections on the overall plan. It is anticipated that it will take about a year to review these and there will then be further consultation prior to announcement of the final preferred sites. (Note: only about half are currently on the website)
- Pylons – Norwich to Tilbury consultation, closing 18 June. Pylons will be as near as Coggeshall and people can object to this at contact@n-tnationalgrid.com. There is

an active campaign (Ms Pearson of Pattiswick). You can object on the basis of landscape, heritage, loss of land etc. using your own words.

- There is also a flood alleviation scheme (designed to reduce the risk of flooding from the River Blackwater to around 300 properties) over a 20-year project starting on the Blackwater near Bradwell, working towards Coggeshall. The Planning application is due and it would involve 3 million extra tonnes of quarrying to gain access for the work at site A48 for access to clay for flood alleviation. It will involve a dam and extra flood storage – The land is owned by the church who are thought to have signed a 100yr agreement with Blackwater aggregates – but not confirmed.
- Cllr Walsh noted the Neighbourhood plan – BDC and planning inspectors must take note of the plan when final.
- Cllr Abrams is aiming to start an interactive google map for the Ward of planning applications so that residents can see in real time what is happening and will be able to report issues to BDC. This will promote the whole ward working together.

16.2 Parish Paths

The footpath report as issued to the Annual Parish Meeting was noted. Recent flooding has subsided, some fallen trees are still to be cleared, and some resurfacing of the Byway near Lordsland Lane has happened. There was also a reminder to residents with hedges or bushes adjacent to footpaths to keep them trimmed. Also, Footpath 10 near Tumbers Green will be closed for surfacing work starting late June. There is a Kissing Gate between Church walk and the Golf Course. The gate is in poor repair and dangerous. There was query over who should repair this as it is on the Parish Asset Register. Suggested Cllrs approach Golf Course to assist with repair as it is on their land.(see later in minutes)

16.3 Village Hall Report inc. Stisted Archives

As stated at the Annual Parish Assembly, there has been a financial loss in the past year due to roof repairs and losing one of main Hall hirers. The Village Hall is planning events such as a Hog Roast with Jazz evening in July and Friday Pub evenings from 5.00 to 10.00 p.m. starting 3rd May to boost income.

17 PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 3rd April 2024 were a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman. Proposed Cllr Hollands 2nd Cllr White and agreed by show of hands.

18 MEETING ACTIONS REPORT

The meeting actions report was briefly reviewed. There were no urgent actions other than repair of the Defib Kiosk. Cllr White has had a review by a joiner who believes it would be very difficult to repair (hinges in poor condition) and would be easier to board up the damaged section. However, as this is listed it is likely we will need to get a replacement door – these are in the region of £1,000 plus fitting. Cllr Hughes offered to check the kiosk to agree a way forward. **ACTION** Cllr Hughes to check Defib Kiosk door for repair / replacement.

19 PLANNING MATTERS

19.1 Planning Applications

Two new planning applications received on 1st May for comment by 29 May.

- 24/00879/HH - Seven Winds, 12 The Street, Stisted for Replacement Oil tank and fire barrier
- 24/00825/HH - Clematis Cottage, 76 Madgements Road, Stisted. Various works on extension, chimney, windows, solar panels etc. Clematis Cottage is a listed building.
- These will require investigation and comment before the next meeting. **ACTION** Cllrs to review and correspond over email to agree comments for submission.

19.2 Planning Results

- i. Dog Walking Field on Kings Lane – Application Granted
- ii. Poly Tunnel on land opposite Brooks Farm. Application Refused. But we note that there is no comment about the current storage on the site. **ACTION** Council will need to follow up on the storage.

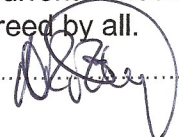
20 Annual Administration

Committee and Working Group Membership

- The list of Committees and Working Groups was reviewed. Mark Waine agreed to keep Tree Warden and Cllr Powers to be Footpath Officer. Neighbourhood plan will eventually be removed. It was **RESOLVED** to retain current membership of the various sub committees and working groups, proposed by Cllr Powers 2nd by Cllr White and agreed by all. It was **RESOLVED** to re-appoint Mark Waine as Tree Warden and Cllr Powers as Footpath Officer, Proposed by Cllr Cottingham-Hill, 2nd by Cllr Hughes and agreed by all

Financial

- The clerk advised that a new version of the **Financial Regulations** is due within the next few days and so suggested that the current ones are accepted and the item added to the next agenda for review of new regulations
- The **Bank signatories & Mandate** were reviewed in the previous meeting, and we are still awaiting online access to be fully set up for Cllr Powers and Cllr White. Cllr Routledge has full online access and Cllr Hughes remains as a signatory. From 29 April Co-op have said that users may request tokens if they cannot get online with the app. Current signatories accepted pending final set up of online access.
- **Asset Register** and insurance – the asset register was agreed with addition of the Line Painting Machine kept in the football shed, and it was noted that the Kissing Gate mentioned earlier is an SPC asset since 1997. **ACTION** Cllrs White and Powers to follow up with Golf Course for assistance with repair of the gate.
- **Insurance values** were noted. The insurance proposal is to insure the Pavilion as non-standard, remove the contents cover from Pavilion as it is empty, decrease All Risks to £1k and move the defib from All Risks to Municipal Infrastructure. Municipal Infrastructure to be increased to approx. £50k to include additional play equipment, village sign, defib kiosk etc. This will reduce the renewal premium from £675 to approx. £500 depending on exact value of Municipal cover taken. This is in a 3-year LTA so alternative quotes are not possible. Renewal due in May. Cllr Hughes has seen the breakdown, and it is more cover for less money. **RESOLVED** to accept the Asset Register and Insurance Proposal. Proposed By Cllr Hughes and 2nd by Cllrs Powers and agreed by all. Clerk to arrange cover.
- Cllr White will approach Richard Hughes to check if he is happy to be appointed as the **Internal Auditor** again for the coming year. Subject to acceptance, Cllr White will issue an engagement letter. **ACTION** Cllr White to speak to Richard Hughes re being the Parish Council Auditor for 24-25. Everyone agreed. Subject to agreement from Richard Hughes it was **RESOLVED** that Richard Hughes should be appointed as the Internal Auditor for the coming year. Proposed by Cllr Cottingham-Hill and 2nd Cllr Hughes and agreed by all. **ACTION** Clerk to find a suitable appointment and scope letter.
- **Annual and monthly financial commitments** were reviewed. There was debate over the need for the annual McAfee virus protection, as well as the monthly payment for the Microsoft 365. **ACTION**: Clerk to check if these can be changed. (Note post meeting – reduced by £28.80 and autorenew off). There was discussion over the lights and electricity. Now that there is only 3kwh per day used there would be little benefit in arranging for lights to be off overnight as the cost of the change could far outweigh the cost savings for perhaps 1.5kwh per day (about £15.00 per month). We can look for a different supplier at the end of the fixed rate contract that has a better daily standing charge as this may bring savings. It was **RESOLVED** to accept the current schedule of commitments. Proposed Cllr Cottingham-Hill, 2nd Cllr Hollands and agreed by all.



Review of Policies

The schedule of updated policies was issued by the Clerk in advance of the meeting with a request to read and return any comments by 29 April. No comments were received. It was checked that everyone accepted the policies as issued. The Clerk will therefore update all policies to the new date and upload to the website as required. It was **RESOLVED** to approve all the updated / new policies as per the pack issued. Proposed Cllr McMillan, 2nd Cllr Cottingham-Hill and agreed by all.

21 FINANCE

21.1 Bank Reconciliation

- The bank reconciliation was reviewed and accepted. Signed by the Chair

21.2 Payments

- Schedule of payments was reviewed and accepted and signed by the Chair

23.3 Update Audit Progress

- Internal Audit complete and AGAR reports complete. These were issued to Councillors 23 April to give 14 days notice to read before they are discussed at the next meeting. They will then be signed and Audit exemption request notice date for Exercise of Public Rights etc.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Bank Reconciliation and the Payments Schedule as presented. Proposed Cllr Hollands, 2nd Cllr White and agreed by all.

22 COMMUNITY, RECREATION & MAINTENANCE

22.1 Neighbourhood Plan

- Cllr Routledge noted that the first public consultation on the Plan has started and that we hope the plan the final plan will go to referendum in the autumn – it is an important document to have in place as BDC will need to take note of it in planning decisions.

22.2 Playing Field

- Cllr Powers noted whilst repairs are need to play equipment he is waiting for the RoSPA inspection in May which he will attend

22.3 Emergency Plan

- Final updates required. **ACTION** Cllr Hughes & Powers to meet early May to finalise ready for submission to BDC.

22.4 Discussion on Wooden fence around Brickwall Farm Greensward

- The Clerk updated that the Landscapes department at BDC have been contacted regarding the fencing but as yet no response. Continue to chase

22.5 Update on Requirement for new Website (.gov extension)

- Clerk to investigate with Cloud Next for the costs to convert the website to a.gov website (has been indicated as approx. £200 to convert). Using a .gov.uk domain suffix is preferable as it adds a visible and clear demonstration of authenticity. **ACTION** Clerk to check if essential and confirm costs. This would not resolve accessibility issues which would require a separate redesign exercise.

22.6 S106 – Gym Equipment – discussion re ideas and obtain quotes

We have £3,499.02 to be spent on an item in the Plan at the time of spending. Parish Councils apply their own procurement rules. Therefore, the District Council will no longer insist on 2 quotations being provided and considered for works up to £5,000.00. We therefore need to obtain a quote for Adult Gym Equipment up to

£3,499 and it is by October 2024. We can apply for the items that were in the support paper:

- Improvements to play equipment including a play surface and fenced boundary.
- Provision of new Adult Gym, Sports and exercise equipment.
- Provision of new water and electricity supply to sports pavilion.

ACTION: Ideas to be sent to Cllr Hughes

23 INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- The carry forward items of Action log, Financial Regulations, Brick wall Wooden Fence, S106, Emergency Plan, AGAR etc
- Entrance area top of Church Walk
- Kissing gate update
- RCCE

Other

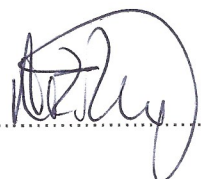
- The Kissing Gate was mentioned as it was felt it may be important to keep Cycles from the Golf Course – however there are many other entry points where there is no barrier
- Mentioned by member of the public that dimming LED lights will not reduce electricity consumption.
- There is no further update on Housing and RCCE but Cllr Hughes will follow up.

24 NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 6th June 2024 at 7:30p.m. at the **Montefiore Institute**.

CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 21:40 pm.



County council report for Stisted Parish Council May 1st 2024

ITEM ONE: After the Minerals Local Plan review consultation finished on April 9th, I had three questions for ECC chief planner Richard Greaves. Here are my questions and his answers:

1. Not all the responses to the MLP Review have been published (including parish councils); do you know when all responses will be published online? RG: We have received in total over 5,000 responses and approximately half of these have either come in via e-mail or are handwritten, meaning we have to upload every reply individually into the consultation portal before they will appear online. Those who have replied via the portal have their responses automatically published online. It will take a few weeks to get all the responses uploaded into the portal.

2. In regards to who decides which sites become “preferred sites”, is this decided by planning officers alone or are elected members such as Cllr Lee Scott involved in the process? If other elected members are involved which members? RG: The decision will be taken by members – either the cabinet member or cabinet at later stages, with full council responsible for final adoption of the plan. The current cabinet member decision is to go through the next consultation (Reg 19).

3. Will the public be consulted again on the “preferred sites” or will they have to wait until planning applications before being able to make further submissions of support, objections or statements? RG: Yes – we will consult again once we have selected the draft preferred allocated sites (Reg 19) and I can’t yet say when this will be, as we have a lot of work to do first to take the comments of the current consultation into account and refine the site selection work before determining what sites are most appropriate to select (or the least worse).

ITEM TWO: Highways repairs: The former Member-led pothole nomination scheme has been replaced with a Member Highways Initiative scheme. It involves five weeks where repairs can be nominated and one week of repairs. It will involve pothole repairs AND repairs to pavements, streetlights, road signs, drain blockages, other street furniture repairs and trimming back overgrown vegetation. The nominations must have first been reported on the Essex Highways portal and then highlighted again by myself on a separate Member Highways Initiative scheme portal. For new reports it will mean reporting the same information twice. But repairs that were reported long ago, it will mean a chance to prioritise them. I’m not a highways engineer but I’m meant to put forward one week’s worth of work. Any work not carried out will be moved to the next six-week window. If all the nominated work is carried out or none is put forward, Essex Highways will go through the existing reported problems and work on them. It doesn’t seem a perfect scheme, but at least it will give us the chance to get repairs done that are important to our local communities. As there are five parishes in the Braintree Eastern division plus East Braintree, I will initially ask each parish council to nominate SIX different highways issues to be fixed per six weeks (6 for 6). Can you therefore send me your top six priorities with photos and What Three Words location (this is what Essex Highways has asked for). Only take photos if it safe to do so as some potholes for instance are in locations where it is too dangerous to stop. The current deadline is May 31 and the first week of works for the Braintree Eastern division is June 3 but please send the requests before May 31 if you can.

ITEM THREE: 796 hours of sewage spills in 2023 from the Stisted Sewage Treatment Works. I have spoken to Lucy Shepherd, the Lead Local Flood Authority Manager at ECC, and she is going to put me in touch with a contact of her at Anglia Water as they run the sewage works and I will ask them whether the sewage spills were necessary and how they intend to reduce this number. I may also start looking for volunteers to take water samples from the River Blackwater because the EA, which is meant to do it, doesn’t do it often enough and it would be good to get a weekly baseline at Stisted, Coggeshall and Kelvedon/Feering.

Kind regards Cllr Paul Thorogood

